

DECISION



**THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES**
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

Mahshigian 119316

FILE: B-208485

DATE: August 27, 1982

MATTER OF: Ameriko Maintenance Co.

DIGEST:

An agency may delay a contract award to permit the apparent low bidder additional time to obtain security clearance needed to perform the services.

Ameriko Maintenance Co. protests the proposed award of a contract to Aerial Service Corp. under solicitation No. N62474-82-C-5435, issued by the Naval Facilities Engineering Command for custodial services. Ameriko, the second lowest bidder, alleges that the Navy improperly has delayed award in order to afford Aerial, the lowest bidder, the opportunity to obtain a required security clearance. We deny the protest summarily.

A solicitation requirement for security clearances in the performance of contracts relates to bidder responsibility. See ENSEC Service Corporation, 55 Comp. Gen. 494 (1975), 75-2 CPD 341. Our Office therefore has held that an agency may allow a prospective awardee a reasonable period after bid opening within which to cure a problem related to its responsibility, including the need to obtain a necessary security clearance, since bid opening is not the critical time for determining whether a firm is responsible. See Career Consultants, Inc., B-200506.2, May 27, 1981, 81-1 CPD 414; Ver-Val Enterprises, Inc., B-198076, March 25, 1980, 80-1 CPD 223.

Ameriko does not suggest that the delay in award to Aerial has been unreasonably long. Therefore, the protest is summarily denied.

Milton J. Aorolan

Acting Comptroller General
of the United States